



MILITARY FAMILY ASSISTANCE BOARD

Meeting Minutes
February 27, 2013

I. Call to Order

The Military Family Assistance Board (MFAB) Meeting was called to order by Interim Secretary David LaCerte, at 10:00 a.m. on February 27, 2013, at the Louisiana Department of Veterans Affairs (LDVA) Administrative Office in Baton Rouge.

II. Pledge/Opening Prayer/Roll Call

The pledge of allegiance was said in unison, and prayer and roll call was conducted by Amy Burris. Nine of eleven members were present.

MFAB Members present: Secretary David LaCerte, Mr. Mike McNaughton, Mr. Sammy Guillory, Ms. Laura Lapeze, Mr. Marshall Hevron, Mr. Brian Jakes, Mrs. Precilla Wilkewitz, Representative Chris Hazel, and LTC Edward Bush.

LDVA Staff present: Al Leger, Amy Burris, and Charmagne Scott.

III. Remarks

In opening remarks, Secretary LaCerte thanked the members for their attendance on short notice, explaining that two requests for pre-deployment travel funds had been submitted by the Louisiana National Guard (LANG) that required board approval. He also commented that submission of applications for need-based claims had decreased due to a decrease in troops being deployed, and amendments approved during the 2012 legislative session eased restrictions on need-based eligibility.

IV. Introduction of New Board Members

Secretary LaCerte replaced retired Secretary Lane Carson as the Governor's designee, effective January 2, 2013. LTC Edward Bush replaced LTC Scott Adams as the National Guard designee, effective September 28, 2012.

V. Election of New Chairman

In lieu of opening the floor for nominations, a motion was made by Mr. Jakes, seconded by Mrs. Wilkewitz, that Secretary LaCerte be appointed the new MFAB Chairman. The motion passed unanimously.

VI. Approval of October 30, 2012, Minutes

A motion was made by Representative Hazel, seconded by Mrs. Wilkewitz, to approve the minutes of the October 30, 2012, meeting as distributed. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Fund Report

Mr. Leger, Third Party Administrator, reviewed handouts showing the current fund balance and expenditures as of February 20, 2013. The starting fund balance for FY 2012/2013 (beginning July 1, 2012) is \$571,228.51. Donations to date totaled \$33,579.75. Expenditures totaled \$63,552.17, of which \$51,550.60 was paid for pre-deployment travel expenses and \$12,001.57 was paid for LDVA outreach and third-party administration. The current fund balance is \$541,256.09.

Secretary LaCerte commented that the Legislature had approved the addition of new charities on the income tax forms, which would probably decrease donations to the MFAF. In addition to current and ongoing marketing efforts, such as mailers to tax preparers and public service announcements by Governor Jindal, the staff will explore new avenues of seeking donations to the MFAF. LTC Bush added that more NG units will be returning home in 2013, which will probably affect the MFAF.

A motion was made by Representative Hazel, seconded by Mr. Jakes to approve the fund report as presented. The motion passed unanimously.

VIII. Discussion of Travel Requests

Mr. Leger presented two requests from LANG for approval of pre-deployment travel funds.

Request #1

LANG's 1084th Transportation Company will be deploying to Afghanistan in the near future and requests transportation funds for round trip travel from Fort Hood, Texas to Reserve, Baton Rouge, and Lafayette, Louisiana for 167 personnel. A quote of \$25,597.88 from Calco Travel was submitted for both trips. Secretary LaCerte stated the 1084th Transportation Company was housed out of the NG Armory next to the Southeast LA War Veterans Home in Reserve, and LTC Bush added that the company will be transporting convoy supplies to Afghanistan.

A motion was made by Mrs. Wilkewitz, seconded by Mr. McNaughton, to approve the request for travel funds from the 1084th Transportation Company as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

Request #2

LANG's 205th Engineers will be deploying to Afghanistan in the near future and requests transportation funds for round trip travel from Fort McGregor, New Mexico to Lake Charles, Hammond, and Bogalusa, Louisiana for 25 personnel. A quote of \$11,112.57 from Hotard of New Orleans was submitted for both trips.

A motion was made by Mr. Jakes, seconded by Mrs. Wilkewitz, to approve the request for travel funds from the 205th Engineers as submitted. The motion passed unanimously.

After Secretary LaCerte and LTC Bush expounded on the positive impact of MFA funds being used toward pre-deployment travel, Mr. Jakes suggested the various NG units that have received funds write a letter of appreciation to the news media in an effort to promote the MFAF and its use of the generous donations from citizens and organizations. Family members of the NG personnel can also be encouraged to write a letter of appreciation. All board members were in favor of this suggestion and LTC Bush will coordinate this effort with LANG's press office.

IX. Other Business

Secretary LaCerte briefly commented on LDVA's current budget standing, stating the department did not lose any positions. He also mentioned that another aggressive legislative package affecting veterans will be proposed during the upcoming session, and the third state veterans cemetery located in Slidell is still progressing through the construction phase. A request for Capital Outlay funding has been submitted for the fourth cemetery to be located in northeast Louisiana.

X. Adjournment

A motion was made by Mrs. Wilkewitz, seconded by LTC Bush, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting adjourned at 10:41 a.m.

Minutes submitted by: Charmagne Scott, AA6

24-May-2013